1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

171 whitish fur, and dyed horsehair tufts at the ends. At the base of each arm
293 are red, yellow, and violet feathers. These are either cut off across the end,
778 or have the uppermost part of the quill with its attached vanes removed.

CUSTOMS CONNECTED WITH RELIGION.

171 Sacred pipes were important in the religion of the Gros Ventre. The
276 beliefs and practices connected with these differ somewhat from those of
778 the Arapaho. The Arapaho recognize only one sacred pipe, which is pre-eminent over all others. Its worship is entirely tribal, though it is in the keeping of an individual. It occupies much the place in tribal life that the sacred pole did among the Omaha. While there are other sacred objects, such as the wheels and bundles, none of them equal the pipe in the regard in which they are held. Among the Gros Ventre there is an analogue of the Arapaho pipe, but also several others. This multiplicity distinctly differentiates the character of the Gros Ventre pipes from that of the Arapaho. The Gros Ventre pipes are not all primarily connected with the origin of the world; they are in part obtained from other tribes. They thus resemble the inter-tribal peace-pipes of the eastern and northern Plains.

[888] The sacred pipes were kept by old men. Their keepers could retain them as long as they wanted. They transferred their pipe to another keeper or owner whenever they wished, especially if some one prayed on their behalf. At present the Gros Ventre have three pipes. It is said that formerly they had more, some of which have been buried with their last owners. The most sacred of these pipes is called "flat-pipe" (çäēitsa"). This is described as being made of catlinite, with the bowl in the shape of a person (inita"). The Arapaho sacred pipe is also called "flat-pipe," and also is not flat; but it differs from the Gros Ventre pipe in being cylindrical and tubular. About the centre of the stem of this Gros Ventre flat-pipe is tied a string. A person in the tent where the pipe is kept should not tell myths. If through forgetfulness he begins to do so, it is necessary for him to continue all night.

276 A sick man sometimes pledged to smoke one of the sacred pipes for his
755 recovery. Then he provided food, and distinguished warriors were invited.
778 Each of these had to recount four coups before the pipe could be lighted. A green cherry-branch was then taken, greased, and put into the fire to light the pipe with. If it burnt well, the man would recover; if it burnt poorly, they were afraid that he would not become well, or that something would happen. Then the pipe was smoked in the greatest silence. Cloth or calico was "given" to it, the wrapping last given being the one on the out-

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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276 755 778

side of the bundle, it is said. Except at such ceremonies as this, only the keeper could touch the pipe.

276 778 [648] [528]

Pipes were sometimes given to other tribes, and were sometimes received from them. Sometimes they were carried by war-parties. One of the three pipes still in existence is said to have been given by the Cheyenne to the Crow, and by the latter to the Gros Ventre, when peace was made between the two tribes. The stem is ornamented with feathers, weasel-skins, and at the end with a bunch of eagle-feathers. The sacred pipes were kept wrapped in many pieces of skin or cloth, and hung up in the tent. In good weather they were hung on a stand of three or four sticks, behind the tent. The keepers of the sacred pipes observed stringent rules. They could not eat of the head or back of any animal, nor of any part of the white-tailed deer, nor any eggs. They were not allowed to bathe, or to paint (except red), or to take the ashes out of the tent. They had to smoke in certain ways. They did not eat dogs, or allow them in the tent; nor did they let dogs touch them, or walk over their legs, or walk before them, while they were smoking. The keepers of the sacred pipes wore their hair uncut and uncombed. They could not cut it until they had given the pipe to another keeper. The hair was worn tied in a bunch just above the forehead. Fig. 42 shows such a bunch of matted hair, said to have been that of the grandfather of the father of the man who was the oldest in the tribe in 1901. This former keeper of the pipe became so old that he lost most of his hair, and the bunch shown was cut off by him before it should drop off. To this hair the later owner of the pipe, his present great-grandson, tied the first of his own teeth to fall out from old age: they are contained in a small cloth sack.

Fig. 42 (50/1002). Matted Hair. Length, 41 cm.

276 778 784 [825] [302]

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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The sacred flat-pipe was also used in the sun-dance. It was once captured in war. Then the man who took it had bad dreams, until the pipe spoke to him in his dream and said, "Return me, or your tribe will be destroyed." Then this man brought back the pipe, and his tribe made peace with the Gros Ventre.

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The making of a sweat-house was not restricted to certain persons. A man wishing success in war would make a sweat-house for another person, in order that he might accomplish the deed he had in mind. Or, if a person was sick, one of his relatives might pledge to make a sweat-house for him, just as he would a dance. In this case the sick person himself would not necessarily use the sweat-house. On the other hand, a doctor might prescribe sweating for a patient, and in this case the sick person would enter the sweat-house.

[757]

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[237]

Fig. 43 (50–4388). Sweat-house Tail. Length, 36 cm.

About twelve or fourteen willow poles were cut for the sweat-house. The entrance always faced the sunrise, and a small cottonwood-tree was erected in front of it. To this, calico or other property was tied by an old man as a gift to the sun. The cloth was partly blackened, the corners being rubbed with charcoal.

When all the participants were inside, the blankets were pulled down and the house closed tight. Water was poured on hot stones, at first five times. Thereupon the lodge was opened at the entrance and at the opposite west end, and the people cooled. It was then closed again, and this time water was poured on the rocks seven times. After cooling once more, water was poured on the rocks nine times. The fourth time, the man that poured the water could put as much or as little on the stones as he wished. After the fourth time, the participants came out and bathed. If they were suffering from pain, they whipped that part of the body with buffalo or horse tails. This practice made the heat greatest at that point, much as if it were beaten into the body.

[757]

2? Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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In April, when the sap rises, the Gros Ventres scraped the juice from the inner bark peeled from cottonwood and sometimes even from box-elder. They also chewed the gum from pines. Infusions of cherry bark or roots and peppermint were said to have been drunk as tea, but such concoctions were considered usually more in the nature of medicines.

So long as the Gros Ventres had the buffalo, relatively little in the way of foodstuffs from the white man were imported. Sugar, flour, occasional fresh fruits, coffee and tea were known and used to some extent after about 1855.[10] The possibility of obtaining whiskey, was, however, one of the items which determined the popularity of a given trading place. Incidentally, tobacco was an important item of trade after 1800, although prior to that time the Gros Ventres had raised their own.[11]

Clothing and Adornment

The importance of the buffalo in the economy of the Gros Ventres was as obvious in clothing and in shelter as it was in food. The buffalo robe, dressed with the hair on, was perhaps the most valuable article inasmuch as it was not only a regular part of their garb, but also was the main article of trade with the whites after about 1830. When decorated, it had high prestige value as a gift.

Seldom was the hide of a buffalo older than two years used for robes since the fur of those of greater age was usually scabby even in the fall when the coats were in best condition. It required the skin of a yearling to make a robe for a twelve-year-old, and the skins of calves made robes for smaller children. When the demand of the trade for robes was very great, the large wool blanket sometimes replaced the robe for wearing apparel and for bedding.

Most of the other articles of clothing were made from well-dressed deer, elk and antelope skins.[12] Deer and elk were more

[10] See p. 22.

[11] This tradition is confirmed by Cocking in 1772, who writes, p. 111, "The tobacco they use is their own planting which hath disagreable flavor. I have preserved a specimen." Kroeber's informants denied knowledge of the tradition.

[12] In 1854 Denig, pp. 464–65, describes the cloth bought for clothing for summer and fall wear, but states that a real hunter must have a buffalo robe, moccasins, mittens, cap, skin leggings and an extra buffalo robe.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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574 your arm because they always get after me if I feed any one.' So as I was going along the other two wives were coming back with the wood and saw me. They asked this third wife what I had wanted and she said: 'She came here to beg.' They asked her: 'Did you feed her?' and when she said no, the other two scolded her saying: 'You should have fed her at least a little bit' and continued to bawl her out for being so stingy."

While not all individuals lived up to the standard of casual hospitality, the majority seemingly did so, and business negotiations were usually transacted while visiting.[18] The individual who [554] dispensed food liberally could expect a return from others, although not necessarily the ones whom he had fed. Furthermore, if a man wished to sustain a good reputation he was expected to entertain well. It was customary, therefore, when fresh meat had been brought in for a man to tell his wife to cook and then he called out: "So-and-so, come and smoke," to as many as he wished to [554] invite. When the guests arrived he greeted each and assigned him to a place in the lodge, the most honored guests being seated in the back opposite the opening. After the guests had eaten, the host filled the pipe from a plentiful supply of "mixture," and the smok- [276] ing continued until the host gave the sign for dispersal by knocking the ashes from the pipe.

553 574 On more formal occasions, such as a naming feast, the host would ask some older man with a strong voice to act as announcer, and in such case the latter would call out by name each guest and say who was inviting him. Ordinarily a man would invite his own age group, his close friends, but it was not customary for the wives of the guests to come. If a woman wished to invite others, she would go to the various lodges and invite them personally. In this type of planned hospitality there was more in the nature of direct exchange although it might be considerably deferred.

574 431 In addition to hospitality, ostentatious liberality accomplished circulation of goods within the tribe. From the Gros Ventre point of view: "Presents were usually given with the intention of doing good and if no return were made, nothing was said or done. But often it turned out that at some later time the recipient would say

[18] Cf. Denig, pp. 514–15.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

us begin again. Keep quiet," and to the first attendant: "Bring a live buffalo chip." The attendant did so, put it on the hearth, and returned to his place. The retiring keeper then took a pinch of dried peppermint leaves, and after the triple successive lowering and three clockwise circles above described, but without song or spoken word, released the peppermint, dropping it on the smoldering chip.

Squatting on his knees and heels instead of cross-legged, so that he could move around more easily, he took up the Flat Pipe, grasping it by the stem, palms up, with his left hand nearer the bowl. Then he circled the stem through the incense and upward until it pointed *east* and held it steady a moment at this point. He repeated the circling and pointing at a lower level, again at a still lower one, and finally made three clockwise circles with the bowl around the incense. Next he repeated the same smudging but toward the *south*; finally, toward the *west*.

After the smudging came the solemn prayer (to be described later) said by the retiring keeper, kneeling upright and holding the Pipe with the stem pointing, not to any point of the compass, but vertically upward. At the end of the prayer he let himself down on his heels, still kneeling, and held the Pipe in position to smoke. He ordered the first attendant: "Bring a live buffalo chip." The attendant thereupon took a chip from the lodge hearth with a forked stick and applied it to the tobacco in the Pipe. The keeper puffed the Pipe until the tobacco was lit, and then took three distinct puffs, blowing the smoke upward around and downward around. Then he passed the Pipe to the new keeper, first swinging it upward. The new keeper, after taking three puffs and blowing the smoke up and down in the same manner, took a real full smoke with the Pipe. Then he passed it clockwise to the nearest ex-keeper to the east, who smoked it, but without swinging it upward. Then it was passed in turn clockwise to the other ex-keepers, if there were others, to be smoked but not swung, till it reached the last nearest the door. The ex-co-keepers did not smoke the Pipe in this or in any other Flat Pipe rite. Then the lighted Pipe was passed back anti-clockwise, without smoking, and without swinging upward except by the new keeper (this honor

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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their fellows, there were many other ones that fulfilled the same function. Of these latter, some, more distinctively ritual, will be dealt with later passim under "Flat Pipe Ritual"; others, more secular, may be mentioned now.

The keeper and co-keeper were not supposed to carry a pack on their own backs, except that on the march the Pipe bundle might be packed by the co-keeper.

They could not mount and dismount a horse on the same side, but mounted from the right side and dismounted from the left.

If you handed something to the keeper it became his property, and if he handed something to you it became yours. If you thoughtlessly left anything with the keeper or co-keeper to keep for you, —if, for instance, you said: "Here, hold my horse (or my gun)," —the object became the property of the keeper or co-keeper and could not be gotten back. The keeper and co-keeper never loaned their robes, dresses, moccasins or other belongings, unless asked, and they were not supposed to be asked to loan. If you thoughtlessly broke the code and asked to borrow something from them, they were obliged to give it to you to own.

Neither the keeper nor co-keeper was allowed to handle ashes, nor could the Pipe bundle remain in the keeper's lodge when ashes were taken out. Were this rule violated, the keeper or co-keeper or both would lose eyesight. When ashes were to be removed from the keeper's lodge, the Pipe bundle was taken outside the lodge by the co-keeper, and both the keeper and the co-keeper stayed outside, while another of the keeper's wives removed the ashes.

When a group of men were seated in a crescent or near-circle enjoying a purely social smoke together, each took a puff from the lighted pipe and passed it clockwise to the man on his left until it reached the end of the line. Then the pipe would be passed back anti-clockwise from hand to hand to the other end without anyone puffing from it. But if the keeper were in the group, he could take a puff not only when the pipe was passing him clockwise but also on its anti-clockwise return. The man passing the pipe to the keeper from either left or right had to raise it upward a little toward his own right before doing so. The first time the pipe reached the keeper, he would take a big puff, and point

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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793 the pipe stem and blow the smoke first upward and then downward, and after that would smoke like anyone else.

793 In general, religious and political life were closely interwoven
624 in the Gros Ventre theocracy. "The Pipes [both the Flat and The Feathered]," as The Boy expressed it, "seemed to hold the tribe together more or less." They were the most sacred and revered possessions of the tribe. The keepers were men of eminence, by virtue of their personal qualities and achievements as well as of their office. In view of these and other facts, it is to be expected that the keeper of the Flat Pipe played a role in Gros Ventre
[562] political life, a role however not shared except in a minimal degree by the co-keeper, a woman in a man-dominated sphere of action. The keeper's role in Gros Ventre political life was fairly clearly defined and delimited. Here we shall summarize the main points.

When camp was to be moved, the decision as to time and destination was mainly in the hands of the head men, although the keeper would participate. In some cases, it seems, he might initiate the move by calling the head men together, usually at night. The whole decision was not ordinarily announced by the crier or criers. He would be sent around to notify the people that all would move camp the next morning. They by looking toward the keeper's lodge in the morning would learn the direction in which the camp would move, for the Flat Pipe bundle would be taken out of the lodge, to the north thereof, and hung on its tripod, with the stem end pointing in the agreed upon direction of the trek. On the trek itself, the co-worker with the bundle led the cavalcade.

When the bands scattered for the winter after the fall hunt and for the late spring after the first spring hunts, usually both the Flat and Feathered Pipes attracted a large following.

The keeper could be invited to sit in important council meetings, and to participate in elections and in decisions involving policy or action and had a certain veto prerogative thereon. He could, on occasions at least, intercede with considerable power, to resolve conflicts and avert bloodshed. He could accompany war-parties and might even have a voice in strategy and tactics, but he was not *ex officio* a fighter or war-leader. He could, as

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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previously mentioned, afford asylum in his lodge to criminals. All in all, he wielded very considerable influence in the political life of his people, but he was in no sense a dictator. 793 624

While a good many of the prerogatives and restrictions attaching to the keeper and co-keeper ceased when their term of office ended, others automatically continued, beyond the period of keepership or, as regards restrictions, could be and often were voluntarily continued by the ex-keepers. Most of such cessations and continuances on which we obtained specific information have been explicitly or inexplicitly noted in the preceding pages.

Flat Pipe and Bundle: Description

The proper name of the Flat Pipe was θe:tsa. It was also called bä'ɔno (turtle), the turtle having played such an important role in the first making of dry land after the flood (for story see No. 3 in Appendix), and a turtle shell ranking next in dignity to the Flat Pipe itself in the Flat Pipe bundle. Bä'ɔno was used in an appealing, pleading or begging way. 778 276

The Flat Pipe bundle containing the Flat Pipe and other sacred objects could not be unwrapped and opened except on solemn ceremonial occasions and with the appropriate elaborate rites. The last such occasion was on February 6, 1946, when it was impossible for us to be present and when photographs taken turned out badly. Our description, therefore, of the Pipe and of the other contents of the bundle has to rest on detailed accounts given us by our various informants who had witnessed one or more openings, upon sketches of the Pipe drawn by The Boy in 1939, by Thomas Main in 1938 or 1939 (after an opening in 1938) and by a young high school student, Frank Cuts The Rope in 1946 (after the above 1946 opening), and upon dimensions given by Thomas Main (See fig. 1).

The Flat Pipe itself is of wood, in a perfect state of preservation, carved in one piece, light brown or almost tan in color, very smooth as if polished from long and frequent wrapping, and about 18½ inches long. The bowl is round, low or squat, and flaring, 3⅛ inches in diameter on top with the hole for the tobacco about ½ inch in diameter, 2½ inches in diameter at its

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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778 base, and 2½ inches in depth from top to bottom. The stem is
276 roundish in section, about 1½ inches in diameter at the distal end, tapering slightly to about 1⅛ toward the proximal. The stem is "humped a bit toward the middle," with a ring carved all round to which is attached a small tasseled string ornament believed to represent the hair rope with which He-who-starved-to-death snared the Red Bird. (For story see No. 5 in Appendix.) The
[283] Gros Ventre women used to make an adornment from "a growth looking like hair" which they gathered from the water and twisted into a strong thread, and The Boy thinks that this tasseled ornament on the Pipe is of the same material.

There is another ring carved around and the proximal end of the Pipe is carved in the shape of a "duck" head. Into the "duck's" bill is fitted a small stem,—about 1⅛ inches long and ¼ inch in diameter, projecting about ½ inch beyond the tip of the bill, encased in copper,—from which the Pipe was smoked.[5]

[532]

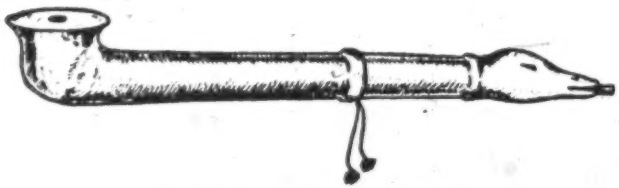

FIGURE 1. THE FLAT PIPE.

The whole Pipe is enclosed in its own numerous wrappings which form a separate case with its own three thong ties within the larger Pipe bundle. No one, it may be added, seems to know how the Flat Pipe got its name; there is nothing markedly "flat" about it, except the somewhat squat bowl.

778 The whole Pipe bundle contains many other sacred objects

[5] Kroeber, 1908, p. 272, gives a description of the Flat Pipe as being made of catlinite with the bowl in the shape of a person. Actually this sounds more like one of the objects in the Feathered Pipe bundle,—the so-called Image or Human Face. See p. 142. Kroeber's mention of a string around the center of the stem of the Flat Pipe, however, matches the description given us. [R.F.]

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Flat Pipe. It was dried before being used for ritual purposes. In the olden days the Flat Pipe keeper and co-keeper had monopolistic control of it in curing. But nowadays a peppermint beverage, good for fits, spasms, and stomach disorder, is used by everybody.

The ritual number of the Flat Pipe is three, whereas that of the Feathered Pipe and the Sacred Lodges is four. Songs are sung three times, ritual gestures are in threes, and so forth. The old people when sitting around smoking socially used often to discuss the reason for this. Some held that Earthmaker sent only three animals down to dive for earth, because, for one reason at least, there were only three animals in the Flat Pipe bundle. Others held he sent four. But regardless of these opposing views on this point in the earthmaking, there was always complete agreement that the Flat Pipe ritual number itself was three, while that in the Feathered Pipe and Sacred Lodge rituals was four.

The musical instrument proper to the Flat Pipe ritual was the rattle (see Plate 1C). The drum, proper to the Feathered Pipe ritual, was not used. In the Flat Pipe ritual, the rattle was shaken clockwise in a sort of circle at breast height, whereas medicine men shook their rattles anti-clockwise and Star Dancers alternately back and forth.[1]

It may be added here that while the Flat Pipe was actually smoked only when it was being ritually transferred to a new keeper and when some individual had vowed to smoke it, and was never danced with, smoking the Feathered Pipe and dancing with it were common.

Among the more significant and more commonly recurring features shared by both the Flat Pipe and Feathered Pipe rituals were clockwise movements, singing, and the use of paint, buffalo chips, and of sage, tobacco, larb, and wild parsley.

Entering and leaving the keeper's lodge, ritual gestures, and so forth were consistently clockwise.

Singing bulked large in the Flat Pipe rite, and, for that matter, in nearly every phase of Gros Ventre religious and social life. As Thomas Main put it speaking for himself and The Boy: "We cannot describe how much singing means in the lives of the Gros

[1] For description of Star Dance, see Flannery, 1953, p. 42.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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788 first contact with whites they found that among these latter too
533 singing had in similar fashion degenerated.

Among the birds and animals it was otherwise. They continued to sing as they had done at the earthmaking. They held fast to the privilege given them and did not abuse it or let their singing degenerate. So it was that the Gros Ventres used to go to the tops of buttes, hills and high mountains and to streams and forests, begging these animals and birds to give them songs, and in this measure to restore singing to its former purpose and dignity. But later the Gros Ventres sometimes prevailed even upon the animals and birds to teach them "no-good songs."

Nevertheless in spite of all this badness and degeneration the Gros Ventres never lost sight of the fact that they depended on the Supreme Being for everything. So whenever they had occasion to pray and perform their ceremonies, they sang. And with such sacred singing was so intimately associated the use of the pipe
● [276 and tobacco that "one could hardly separate singing and pipe-
782] smoking." In nearly all rites they entered in as a means of imploring the Supreme Being to grant the people's requests. The Gros Ventres learned by experience that if they sang and smoked and followed faithfully the rest of the Flat Pipe ritual, they could at least hope for a hearing by the Supreme Being. Smoking too, it may be added, like singing, later degenerated, a point to which we shall come presently.

533 Practically every Gros Ventre ceremony or social event began or was accompanied with song. And each of the many Gros Ventre songs had to be used on certain and only certain specified occasions. Thus, for example, it would not do at all to sing Pipe songs during social dances or in a hand game or at "good-time" gatherings. Each religious or secular occasion had its own song or set of songs. Very commonly a story teller would in the course of his or her narrative sing the song or songs the characters in the story were supposed to have sung.

Many Gros Ventre songs were wordless. In most of the worded ones, the words consisted of short pregnant phrases or sentences preceded and followed by wordless singing.

Two kinds of singers were recognized and distinguished: those who had good voices, and those who had knowledge of the

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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372 The Flat (and Feathered) Pipe keepers had to keep on hand a good supply of buffalo chips, the proper ritual fuel, as also the common fuel of the people especially when traveling out on the woodless plains. The Boy once asked his father: "Why are buffalo chips used in rites? This does not seem proper." "Buffalo chips," Lame Bull replied, "are plentiful everywhere and burn longest. And they are cleanest: the ashes do not stick to your hands; wood ashes do and are hard to rub off." After the buffalo were exterminated, cattle chips were substituted, but these, as Coming Daylight stated, "have an awful odor when burned, while buffalo chips have none." She used to gather buffalo chips for her uncle when he was Flat Pipe keeper; Cora Chandler used to gather cattle chips when her uncle Curly Head was Feathered Pipe keeper. On one occasion, after the disappearance of the buffalo, Coming Daylight went south with her husband, coming back by way of Yellowstone Park where some buffalo were kept. Here she found some buffalo chips, put them in a sack, and brought them all the way back home to give to Horse Capture, then the Flat Pipe keeper. On arriving home she went to his lodge, "covered the Pipe" with a new robe, and laid the chips at the head of the Pipe.

824 The other plants [besides peppermint] that entered into the Flat Pipe and Feathered Pipe rites were sage, tobacco, larb and wild parsley.

Sage was used for the Pipe bed and for other ritual purposes. For the spring Flat Pipe rite at least, only a certain kind of sage (artemisia sp.) was used. Sage was gathered by the co-keeper or one of her children, and could be gotten all the year round, even if in winter only the sticks. According to tradition, the gathering and use of sage for medicinal purposes were in the old days confined to keepers; but in more recent times the people in general have used it, by rubbing themselves with it and smelling it for headache, and by boiling the leaves, especially the top ones, and drinking the infusion for coughs, colds and tuberculosis.

824 773 ● 276 According to the traditional story as told by The Boy, tobacco and tobacco planting came originally to the Gros Ventres from Earthmaker who taught the first man how to plant tobacco, and its cultivation and use have come down in an unbroken line since

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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that time. In the olden days it was only the keeper of the Flat Pipe who planted and harvested it; and for ritual use only.[4] As time went on, the keeper thought to himself: "These older men should have something to pray with when the tribe breaks camp and each band goes its own way." So he said to these older men, each a chief in his own band: "When your bands go their own way you have nothing to use in your prayers. So I am going to distribute some tobacco to each of you for you and your band to use." This he did, and so the use of tobacco began to spread. After this some bands broke away entirely from the Gros Ventres, the original planters and users of tobacco, and became separate tribes and the language changed. The probable order, The Boy thinks, in which they broke away was: first, the Gros Ventres of Dakota,[5] next the Cree, then the Piegan, after this the Crow, and last the Arapaho. He thinks too that the keeper who first distributed tobacco to the bands must have distributed the seed too, for in later years all these people raised their own tobacco.

In the course of time the use of tobacco among the Gros Ventres underwent two important developments, from ritual to recreative and from male to female use.

In earliest days only the keeper and a few old men used tobacco, and used it only ritually. When somebody got sick, the keeper

[4] In 1948 The Boy elaborated on the original planting of tobacco which he had heard Lame Bull discuss many times. "It was virgin soil deep in the forest and they made a woven fence around it so nothing could get in. After the planting, they moved off for hunting and every once in a while the keeper made a ceremonial smoke and prayed to the Supreme Being that the tobacco would grow. After the vegetation began to mature they returned to the plot and the keeper went to look and thanked the Supreme Being in a loud voice that the crop had matured. The tobacco was picked ceremoniously and three plants were always left standing in the plot." There was a plot of ground in the forested area of Canada on which nothing grew and which the Gros Ventres called "Broken Grass." In Lame Bull's time they used to leave offerings there whenever they passed nearby. The Boy and other old men and women believe that this was the site on which the original tobacco was planted under instruction from the Supreme Being. [R.F.]

[5] The original Gros Ventres, according to the same tradition, had no corn. Corn originated among the Gros Ventres of Dakota. [For confirmation of tradition regarding raising of tobacco, see Flannery, 1953, p. 61, n. 12.]

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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276 would use tobacco in his prayers for the patient. If the patient survived but was still weak, the keeper made him smoke to get back his strength. So some of the other tribesmen learned to smoke. Gradually social (and recreative) smoking took its place together with ceremonial smoking.

In earlier times, the women never smoked either ritually or socially. Even in rites where they had an important role, such as [562] the inauguration of a new pipe keeper, they did not smoke, as women were considered secondary, not equal to men. Even as late as The Boy's and Thick's early boyhood in the decade before the last buffalo disappeared (1884), only the old women smoked, never the young girls. The spread of the custom among these old women was probably due to their discovery by experience that the smoking prescribed for maladies, such as, chronic headache, was good for the body. But even today, although women smoke non-ritually when alone or among themselves, they are not allowed to smoke at a Pipe rite, and, if wives are present when a man invites a group of men for a social visit or meal and he fills up his pipe to give his guests a smoke, he does not offer the pipe to the wives.

Tobacco was used only in pipe smoking. It was sometimes smoked straight by old men and old women, and by the sick as [171 824] a cure. But ordinarily the Gros Ventres smoked it mixed either with red willow, as did the Cree and Assiniboine, or preferably, and in the Flat Pipe rites always, with larb.

Larb is "a ground plant that grows on hills and mountains." We could get no specimen for identification. After the tobacco and larb were mixed, a little more larb than tobacco, fat was worked into the mixture to season it. On taking leave from his Gros Ventre [431 609] friends in 1940 the present author was given a small bag of this mixture as a token of peace and good will and found the mixture a very pleasant aromatic smoke.

278 The wild parsley, associated with the Flat and Feathered Pipe and with the Crazy Lodge, was used as a powerful poison. It was greatly feared and was spoken of in undertones. Its preparation is a lost art. The whole plant was and is considered poisonous, but poison was prepared principally from the root, which was first

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793 also to the whites, both mounted and dismounted their horses from the right side, just as all other Gros Ventres did.

784 "You could not lend the Feathered Pipe keeper a horse, because if you loaned it to him this was just the same as giving it to him. You could not take it back once the rope was in his hands. The keeper never borrowed anything. If someone thought the keeper was short of something and without thinking said to him, 'Here is one you can use,' that was just too bad because that was really giving it to him."

[201] Apparently the keeper could not point at a person with his index finger, but would instead use his thumb.

793 624 The role of the Feathered Pipe keeper in the political life of the Gros Ventre was quite similar to that of the Flat Pipe keeper, as regards such things as decision when and whether to move camp, matters of public policy, and veto power thereupon.

Feathered Pipe and Bundle

793 798 The Feathered Pipe was first given, as noted in the origin stories (see No. 6 in Appendix), from above by Bha'a, the thunder and storm being. Garter Snake's father, Bull Lodge, used to tell her that it was really given by Ixtcibani:hohat, the Supreme Being, through Bha'a; that the Supreme Being was the father of the Pipe; and that it was to remain forever with the Gros Ventres and never under any condition to be transferred to any other tribe. According to Gros Ventre tradition, while the Feathered Pipe is very old, it is not as old as the Flat Pipe; when the Feathered Pipe was first given to the Gros Ventres, they were already in the possession of horses. According to The Boy, the Feathered Pipe was first given after the Gros Ventres came to their present territory which had previously been Snake Indian country, but before the coming of the whites thereto. With the Pipe itself were given in the beginning the stone image or face, the whistle, and the staff, to be described presently.

798 The proper name of the Feathered Pipe was ana:θanitč (it has feathers).

276 We were unable to attend any unwrapping rite and to see the Pipe. It was described to us as being in one piece, of "smooth,"

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"glistening" [no doubt, highly polished], very dark grey or greyish brown stone, with three or four humps on the upper surface of the stone stem part. Our informants, who had seen the Pipe, disagreed as to whether there are feathers on the Pipe itself, and one of them stated that it had looked different to him on the two occasions he had seen it.

In the Pipe bundle were many other sacred objects besides the Pipe itself. Most of these had their separate wrappings or cases, the Pipe itself being wrapped in buffalo hair. The first keeper, according to Garter Snake, wrapped the Pipe itself in a bit of white buffalo skin. The outermost wrapping of the Pipe bundle was, originally at least, of tanned elkskin, tied around with four strings. There was also, again originally at least, a bear robe cover for the bundle.[4]

The Pipe bundle would shake and quiver when there was going to be an earthquake. The keeper could then predict that the earthquake would occur soon, although he could not predict the exact time. Not so long ago Cora Chandler's old aunt saw the bundle quiver, and sure enough that summer an earthquake occurred.

Informants consistently agreed that there were four main things in the bundle, and that two of the four were the Pipe itself and the carved stone face.[5] Most of them included the feathered stick among the four. As to whether the fourth was the whistle, the owl, or the crane, there was considerable conflict of opinion, a conflict we were unable to clear up.

The feathered stick, from which the Pipe itself derived its name,

[4] Dr. Hagener noted at the 1951 opening that the innermost wrapping of the whole bundle was of "old bison leather" and the outer wrapping of modern cloth." [R.F.]

[5] Dr. Hagener stated in letter of Jan. 18, 1954, "The pipe displayed in the pictures [Plate 3, C and D] was not the chief pipe of the bundle (that having mysteriously disappeared). It was however made of the red stone commonly traded from the Minnesota area. Although there were other pipes in the bundle this was the only one we were permitted to see. Iron Man checked on the presence of other pipes by feeling inside the leather casings, but did not bring them out." Under date of Aug. 8, 1954, Dr. Hagener remarked: "Dr. Nitz was of the opinion that there were two somewhat similar pipes in the bundle, one of which had disappeared. The picture . . . is of the remaining one." [R.F.]

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and before any further ritual step toward fulfillment of his vow had been taken, he arranged to have formal and public announcement of his vow to the people, even though he had already told some of his relatives or friends quickly or confidentially of it. In some instances the actual making of the vow took place at the public announcement rite. In either case the vower would call together in his own lodge all the "holy" men and women, such as ex-keepers but looked upon as holy, powerful, great. When all had gathered and were properly and solemnly seated, the vower filled a common pipe, offered it to one of the men present to have him pray with it and announce the vow. The one to whom it was offered could not refuse. If he were already in the place of honor in the circle he would remain there; else he would take it, and the occupant would vacate it. The chosen announcer would next make a smudge with sweet grass, and smudge the pipe in it. Then carrying the pipe he would go outside the lodge, stand in front of it, and in a loud voice call for order and command attention. After all was quiet, he would hold up the pipe and say: "So-and-so (the vower's name) has made a vow to do such-and-such (the content of the vow), you, Ixtcibani:hohat," ending with a prolonged "Yo ho ho ho." Then he prayed, addressing first as always, the Supreme Being and next to the other supernatural beings such as the Four Holy Beings, Those-who-follow-each-other, but not the Last Child, that the vow might be carried out well, that its purpose might be attained (if not already attained), and that no sickness or other misfortune might come to the tribe during or after the ritual fulfillment of the vow. During the prayer, the announcer would mention the name of the person whom the vower had chosen as ritual grandfather. After ending the prayer, the announcer re-entered the lodge, and gave the pipe to this grandfather, and the latter took the place of honor which the announcer had momentarily occupied. Before or after the handing over of the pipe, all would smoke it, and some of those present would, of their own choice and without being invited, say a short prayer for themselves or for the vower.

Throughout the Sacred Dances, any ritual praying and smoking to be done with a pipe was done with an ordinary black stone pipe. Apart from the bringing of the Flat Pipe to the erection of the

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Sacrifice Dance center pole, the sacred Pipes did not enter at all into the Sacred Lodges.

In all the Sacred Dances, the ritual number was four and movement was clockwise.

A sweat-lodge rite was held in connection with the Sacrifice and Crazy Dances, but we could obtain no details on it; whether also in connection with the others our informants could not say.

The Sacrifice, Drum, Kit-fox, Dog and Crazy Dances regularly lasted four nights and days; the Fly and probably the Old Men's and Old Women's just one day.

The sacred Dances were not held in the winter time when the bands were usually widely scattered, but in the period from about May or June when the bands foregathered to September after which the bands tended to scatter for the fall buffalo hunt.

The lodges for the Old Men's and Old Women's Dances were very simple and were put up outside the camp circle toward the south thereof. The lodges for the other Dances were erected inside the camp circle, near the center.

Feasting daily during the four-day dances was customary, except during the Sacrifice Dance which entailed much fasting on the part of the participants.

The alternation of reverent tension and pleasurable free release that characterized the sacred Pipe rites was even more characteristic of the Sacred Dances.

Sacrifice Dance

The proper name of the Gros Ventre dance commonly referred to by whites and by many English-speaking Gros Ventres as the Sun Dance is aθe:hao'wə (literally, "sacrifice lodge"—aθe:'atc "sacrifice" and -ao'wə "sacred [not common] lodge"; cf. Sifton "sacrifice," athéyach and "Sun Dance," athéihawh'). We are therefore using the term Sacrifice Dance for it. The sun does not enter at all into it. The name apparently has references to the tortures undergone around the center pole by the main participants.

Our chief informants on the Sacrifice Dance were The Boy and Thick, who had witnessed the rite as boys and who had learned much about it from their elders: Coming Daylight, who had wit-

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to jump on them," simulating copulation, to the amusement apparently of the other "cows." Whether the chief vower and the "boss" took part in the dancing is not clear,—more probably they did not.

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Intervals between the dancing were given over to smoking, chatting, feasting, and fun-making. In more modern times at least the women smoked for pleasure. The dancers were each expected to bring food to the dance, and feasting was an important element, the singers at the back of the lodge faring particularly well. During these intervals, too, the women would play all kinds of tricks on one another, such as taking some woman's belongings and hiding them. They would have "lots of fun," "laughing all the time" and "making lots of racket."

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Apparently it was customary for relatives of dancers in the Women's Dance, as in other sacred Dances, to give away presents to third parties in honor of the dancers.

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The more public and more spectacular episodes of the Women's Dance, as of the Sacrifice and Crazy Dances, occurred on the fourth and last day. To these features we now turn.

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The "cows" and the "bull," all wearing their headdresses and accompanied by the "calves," left the dance lodge and went in a bunch to look for water in the creek and to drink. The "bull" followed to the rear, herding the "cows," and if one of the latter started to stray she would be punched back with the herd. Part of the time at least, the "cows" were "bent over, dancing like animals, and going on hands and knees." The "bull" would run after different "cows" and "jump on them," in mimic copulation. Coming Daylight, as a "calf" was told to follow one of the "cows" as her "mother" and try to nurse, but the "bull" chased her away when she approached her mother. In general, the "calves" were supposed to keep to the side, out of the way of the "bull."

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After the drink at the creek, came the pantomime buffalo drive. The two "hunters" (cf. supra, p. 245) would make a fire outside the camp circle up-wind from the women, and as the women got the smell of the smoke, the "hunters" on horseback drove them, as in a real buffalo drive, and shot the "cows" or some of them with blunt arrows that did not hurt. The "cows" who had before-

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upward or downward but to the hill, with a ritual gesture and would make his request direct to the one or ones inhabiting the hill or mountain top and tell this one or these ones what [power] he actually wanted."

In all the above the quester was following the general ritual and social Gros Ventre pattern for making requests. Such was the ritual pattern in prayer with a pipe. And whenever a pipe was offered to a fellow-tribesman it was offered with the stem toward him. The offering of a pipe to another when asking something of him was an "emphatic way of pleading." Thomas Main here remarked: "If I wanted to borrow money of another and were afraid my request would not be granted, I might offer him a pipe when asking for the loan and so reinforce my request."

Bull Lodge, when seeking power on a butte, made offerings of material goods and of the first joint of his left little finger. Little Man made offerings of a bit or bits of his flesh.

While up on the mountains the quester, alone and praying and concentrating his thoughts on his quest, would fast, neither eating or drinking, and would walk around crying, shedding real tears. He, or the man who had first accompanied him to the spot and then left him, would make a rude sleeping place of rocks and twigs and branches. This sort of "nest" was called his "call-for-power lodge." When the quester got weak or fatigued or sleepy, he would lie down in this "nest" and doze or sleep. Al Chandler stated: "Their [the quester's] sleep is not sound, any little thing wakens them. They are expecting something all the time and they look for it." Usually power was given during such sleep, although in some instances when the quester was wide awake. The power-giving being would speak to the quester and, usually at least, appear to him.

Sometimes a quester would be told by the being whose "house" was the mountain on which the man was questing: "Here is the kind of power I have. This is all I have. That other one [being] has the kind of power you wish. Go over there." And the being would name some other butte or mountain. Thus, for instance, a man going to a given mountain to seek wealth or war power might be offered doctoring power, and if he did not take this

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beat a rapid tattoo on the drum while he prayed, and when he started to sing he beat a much slower, even time." Little Man, Al Chandler's adoptive father, in one case at least, followed a somewhat different procedure. He hit the drum just a little, that is, lightly, while he prayed. Then he sang and beat the drum harder, and sang until those present caught on to the song. Then he gave the drum to one of the men, and the others present sang to the latter's drumming while Little Man doctored the patient. If, according to The Boy, a medicine man used a rattle, he shook it in circles anti-clockwise—in contrast to the clockwise circling of the Flat Pipe keeper and the fanning back and forth of Star dancers.

Disease-causing objects within the patient's body were ordinarily extracted by suction. The object extracted was swallowed by the doctor, burned, or otherwise disposed of or destroyed, as will be given later in describing the curing procedures of individual doctors. A pipe stem might be used, in exceptional instances at least, for sucking out the object, to judge from the offer, with this provision, of power once made to Singer in a dream.

Tobacco smoking was sometimes prescribed for the sick by a Pipe keeper when doctoring and apparently by other doctors. According to The Boy, tobacco in such use was often pure, unmixed with other plant.

In curing rites, sometimes—how commonly, we could not determine—sweating in a sweat-lodge was prescribed for the patient by male doctors, in one instance to be described later, by a female doctor. Singer described an experience of her own as follows. "I was once thrown from a horse and hurt pretty badly. I was afraid I could not stand the sweating, for I could never stand heat. Sure enough, although the medicine man told me to crawl in and lie down so he could work on my back, as soon as they put the water on the stones, I got out in a hurry."

We now pass on, from more general curing practices to those of individual doctors, and may well start with an account from Coming Daylight which illustrates both sickness experience and curing ritual.

"I am going to tell about the time I almost died. We were living

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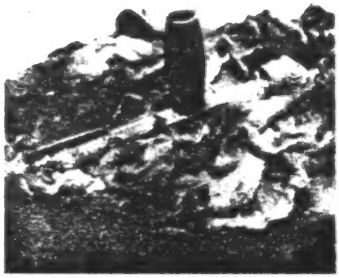
A. *Unwrapping Feathered Pipe bundle at hearth.*

B. *Contents of bundle.*



C. *One of the pipes in the bundle.*

D. *Iron Man II holding a pipe from bundle.*

PLATE 3

[p.427]

8:Flannery E-5 (1940-1948)1960 NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

Her final rejoinder was such a witty and pointed one that everyone laughed heartily at her rival's expense. In this culture, of course, public ridicule was a far more effective retaliation than the biting and scratching that other women said frankly they would have indulged in when attacked.

Expression of emotional excess was institutionalized for the Gros Ventres, as for the rest of the Plains, in the bereavement situation. Upon the death of a husband, son, or father, a woman was expected to start wailing as soon as she heard the news, have her hair cut off, discard good clothes for old ragged ones, gash her arms and legs, go to the hills to mourn and cry, resisting for a time the pleas of her relatives to return, and being watched lest she attempt suicide. Coming Daylight was only a young woman when she was first widowed and the mourning pattern was still in full vogue. It is certain from other evidence than Coming Dayling had a deep affection for this husband to whom she had been given as a child-bride and in whose kindly and indulgent treatment she had found a pleasant escape from the rigorous discipline of her grandmother. Nevertheless the public expression of her grief was minimal—no abandonment for her. Although her sister was sent on the hills with her to keep watch over her in the usual way, Coming Daylight was easily persuaded to return shortly though she herself was proud of the fact that she had stayed out so long that she actually had got a frozen toe! In later years when all that was left of the ritual was the wailing out on the hills, she lost the son whom she herself, and everybody else, acknowledged as her favorite. She had not been on the hills very long when she experienced a significant dream, as follows. She was in a lodge at the rear of which was a big pile of tobacco mixture and a pipe. The owner of the lodge filled the pipe and approached her. She was frightened because she didn't smoke. The owner of the lodge however told her: "Look at these people." She looked and saw many with their hair cut and their bodies bleeding from the gashes inflicted in grief. The man then told her: "That is in the past. Nowadays your only consolation is in smoking." So she accepted the pipe and, after smoking it, she was painted in ceremonial fashion by each of those other mourners. Then the owner of the lodge dismissed her saying: "Now, go home and don't ever go on the hills and mourn again. But always smoke if you want to." She went home right after this dream and when she told her husband of it he accepted it as valid and persuaded her sister to prepare for Coming Daylight her first real smoke. She maintained that the habit subsequently developed was actually a great comfort to her.

The final area with which we shall be concerned here is the war complex—a vital aspect of the old Plains culture. Gros Ventre women were allowed direct but limited participation in these activities in the sense that, while they would not join a party of men who were going on horse-raiding or revenge expeditions, if opportunity offered they might exhibit the same kind of bravery that a man should show and derive considerable status therefrom. For instance, if one of the enemy fell nearby, the women rushed out from camp to count coup, and to grab trophies with which to inaugurate the relationship known as "enemy-friends." Coming Daylight, however, was never one to indulge in this sport. She told of the one—and to her extremely distasteful—occasion on which her hand literally was forced. It seems that during a raid on their camp one of the enemy was shot and her husband scalped him. The victim was lying not far from her lodge and, as her husband dashed off to pursue the rest of the Assiniboine, he shouted for her to come out and see what was going on. Coming Daylight saw the man lying there, face down, covered with blood. He was not dead